



# TRANS REPORT

MAY 2007

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## SOUTH COAST RAIL PLAN

Page 2

## CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES

Page 3

## MBTA PROGRAM FOR MASS TRANSPORTATION

Page 3

## BIKE-TO-WORK WEEK

Page 4

## WALKABLE COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Page 5

## MPO ACTIVITIES

Page 5

## CHAPTER 90 MONIES RELEASED

Page 6

## MEETING CALENDAR

For the most recent information on the following public meetings and others that may have been scheduled after TRANSREPORT went to press, go to [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org) or call (617) 973-7119.

### AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

#### May 9 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. Boston Region MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM.

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. Conference Room 4. 3:00 PM.

#### May 16 (Wednesday)

Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Board: State Bicycle Plan Update. Executive Office of Transportation Conference Room 1, Suite 3150. 1:00 PM.

#### May 17 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Unified Planning Work Program Subcommittee. MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM.

Calendar continued on p. 2

## MPO Approves Regional Transportation Plan

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) reached a major milestone on April 12 with the adoption of its long-range transportation plan, JOURNEY TO 2030.

The plan is a financially constrained program of planned highway and transit improvements proposed for the region through 2030.

The next step is submittal to federal and state transportation and environmental agencies for their review and approval. The MPO is seeking full approval by July 1, the deadline set by the

federal surface transportation legislation, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

The MPO-adopted JOURNEY TO 2030 may be downloaded from the MPO's Web site, [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org). The plan may also be obtained on CD-ROM by contacting the MPO at (617) 973-7100 or at [publicinformation@bostonmpo.org](mailto:publicinformation@bostonmpo.org). It is also available in accessible formats upon request.



## MPO to Update Public Participation Program

### CAN WE HEAR YOU NOW?

The MPO members hope they can. To make sure, the MPO is updating its public participation program. The intent of the participation program is to spell out the steps the MPO takes as it conducts its continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan transportation-planning process.

The MPO will be launching a

45-day public review and comment period after the program is released to solicit ideas and comments. You are invited to share your views and suggestions for the program before the end of the comment period on June 20.

Members of the public will know what to expect and can decide when and how they can best be involved in the planning.

• Public Process *cont. on p. 2*



The Boston Region MPO annual election will be held in Danvers on May 23 at the Spring Meeting of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) (see the calendar for meeting details). MPO members whose current terms are expiring are the Town of Framingham and the City of Everett.

For more information about the MPO election process, visit our Web site, [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org).

## Amendment to TIP under Review

The Boston Region MPO is considering a second amendment to the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 element of its FFYs 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Amendment Two would add two new transit projects and would reallocate funding among several other transit programs.

The public comment period for the proposed amend-

• TIP Review *cont. on p. 3*

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation, Cities of Boston, Everett, Newton, and Salem, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Highway Department, Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

# South Coast Rail Plan Unveiled

The Patrick administration announced its plan to restore passenger rail service by 2016 between downtown

Boston and the cities of Fall River and New Bedford, at a cost of \$1.4 billion.

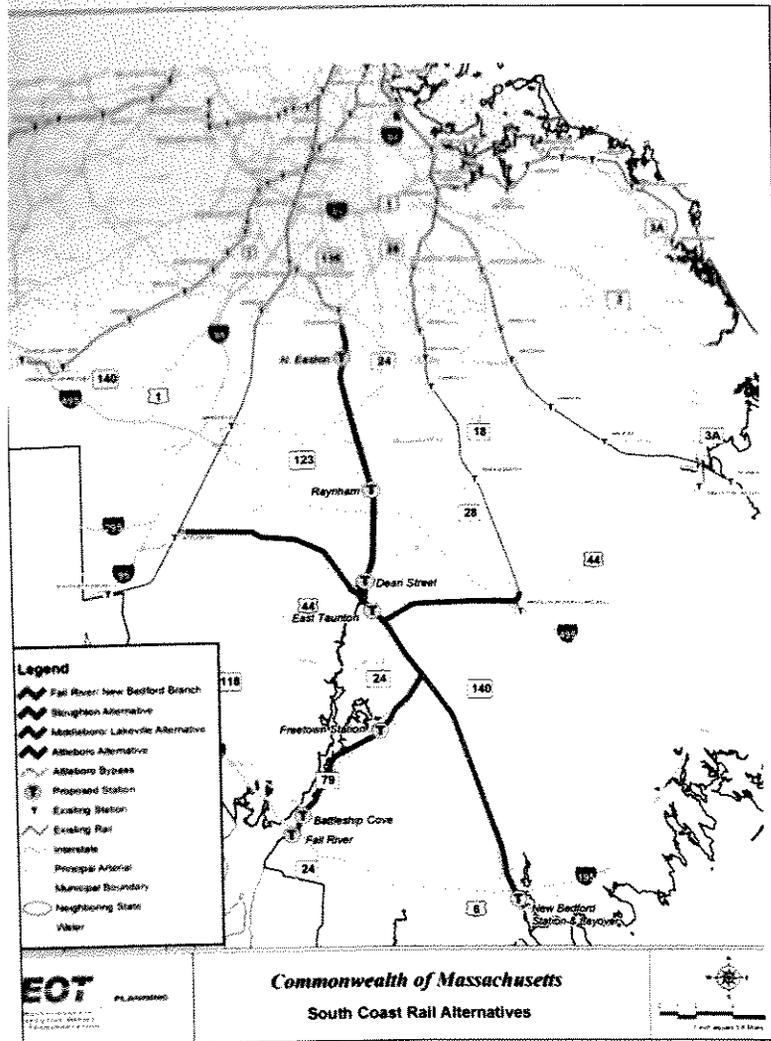
Expanding the rail infra-

structure south is expected to spur investment in one of the fastest-growing areas of the state, revitalize the area's economy, and encourage job growth. The new passenger service will provide better access to Boston area jobs and services for south coast residents. The service will also provide Boston area workers access to more affordable housing. Air quality in the region will also likely improve when commuters have an alternative to driving.

The administration's new report *South Coast Rail: A Plan for Action*, released last month, outlines the next steps that the state must take to move the project forward. They include:

- Conducting economic development and land use planning
- Conducting public outreach
- Acquiring right-of-way
- Completing the project design

• *South Coast Rail.com*, on p. 6



Calendar cont. from p. 1

## May 23 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3. 1:00 PM*

## May 24 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee: Recommendation on federal fiscal years 2007–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Two. *Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM*

Immediately followed by:

Boston Region MPO: Vote on Adoption of TIP Amendment Two. *Conference Room 4.*

MBTA Program for Mass Transportation Stakeholder Advisory Committee. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. From noon to 2:00 PM*

## May 29 (Tuesday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. *Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3. 4:30 PM*

## June 7 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4. 10:00 AM*

Boston Region MPO Unified Planning Work Program Subcommittee. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150. 1:00 PM*

## AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

### May 15 (Tuesday)

Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee. *Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, St. Clair Room, 31st Floor, 60 State Street, Boston. 3:00 PM*

### May 17 (Thursday)

MBTA Community Meeting: Talbot Avenue Station on the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line. *Anthony D. Perkins Community Center, 155 Talbot Avenue, Dorchester. 6:30 to 8:00 PM.*

### May 22 (Tuesday)

MBTA Program for Mass Transportation: Public Workshop. *Thayer Public Library, 798 Washington Street, Braintree. From 6:00 to 8:00 PM*

### May 23 (Wednesday)

Metropolitan Area Planning Council Spring Meeting. *Sheraton Ferncroft Resort, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers. 9:00 AM*

development of this program, please attend a workshop that will be held in June

• *Public Process cont. on p. 6*

# Can We Hear You Now? Comment Sought on Public Process

• *Public Process cont. from p. 1*

The major changes to the existing program are updates that reference outreach activities and initiatives that the MPO has adopted since the current program was approved in 2002. For example, text has been added to explain the MPO's Regional Equity Program. Activities that support development of the Transportation Improvement Program

(TIP) and the Unified Planning Work Program, such as the "How-To" Seminars and the TIP Input Day, are listed. The MPO's increased use of its Web site to provide information and access to documents, studies, and reports is noted.

New text has been inserted to provide for the consultations required in the development of long-range transportation plans under the Safe, Accountable,

Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

Contacts and interested parties invited to participate in the MPO planning process are now specified. The MPO has already implemented many of the updates: new contacts have been added to the MPO's MPO-INFO listserve, and new consultations for the Plan were undertaken.

To participate in the devel-

# Policies Enacted to Reduce Region's Contribution to Climate Change

Following a recent Supreme Court ruling, the Commonwealth and local governments have enacted several policies to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the state and region. There are a handful of older policies that are briefly described below to set the context for these more recent policies.

In August 2001, the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP) adopted a regional action plan for addressing climate change. This agreement, known as the Climate Change Action Plan 2001, reflected the con-

viction of the NEG/ECP that climate change is a significant environmental concern that will have a major impact on the region's environment and economy. In 2004, the Massachusetts Climate Protection Plan adopted the same targets as the Climate Change Action Plan 2001:

- Short-term – Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2010.
- Medium-term – Reduce GHG emissions 10 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2020.
- Long-term – Reduce GHG

emissions sufficiently to eliminate any dangerous threat to the climate; current science suggests this will require reductions to as much as 75–85 percent below current levels.

Governor Deval Patrick signed the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) in January, committing Massachusetts to a multistate effort to reduce emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and address global climate change. States participating in RGGI are developing a regional strategy for controlling emissions, including a market-based, multi-

• *Climate Change cont. on p. 4*

# Call for TIP Comments

• TIP Review *cont. from p. 1*  
ment will close May 21 at 5:00 PM. A meeting of the Boston Region MPO to take action on Amendment Two is scheduled for May 24 (see the calendar for details).

As *TRANSREPORT* went to press, the MPO was also considering comments received on TIP Adjustment Three during a public review period, which closed on May 1. Adjustment Three, which the MPO is scheduled to take up on May 3, allocates a portion of the MPO's Suburban Mobility Program funding to the Ipswich Essex Explorer shuttle.

Copies of the proposals as well as meeting information may be obtained at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org) or by contacting Boston Region MPO staff at (617) 973-7100 (voice), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), (617) 973-8855 (fax), or [publicinformation@bostonmpo.org](mailto:publicinformation@bostonmpo.org). Accessible formats are available upon request.

summer, the MBTA will host five public workshops around the region to gain input about the challenges that MBTA customers currently experience when using the MBTA system and to gauge future travel needs. Each workshop will focus on one or more travel corridors in the MBTA service area. Participants will be invited to discuss where they encounter problems and how the mix of services in each corridor—and across corridors—could be improved to

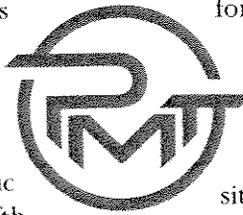
• *PMT cont. on p. 6*

# MBTA Launches Public Process for PMT Development

Over the next 15 to 18 months, the MBTA will be seeking input from the public as it develops its long-range planning document, the Program for Mass Transportation (PMT). The PMT outlines a 25-year vision for the Boston region's public transit system, the fifth-largest transit system in the United States, serving 175 municipalities. In the process of developing this document, the MBTA—with input from the public—aims to identify and prioritize capital investments that will improve the performance of the transit system and keep the system in a state of optimal repair.

Under its enabling legislation, the MBTA is required

to update the PMT every five years. This requirement provides the MBTA with the opportunity to revisit the long-range vision and goals for the transit system.



As a fiscally unconstrained document, the PMT is the foundation for transit planning in the region. The PMT identifies the universe of transit projects that the Boston Region MPO considers for inclusion in its long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a 25-year plan for highway and transit projects in the region, and its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a shorter-term document for implementing RTP projects. The PMT also defines the

pipeline of projects that feed into the MBTA's Capital Investment Program (CIP), which is prepared annually and sets the timeline for implementing transit projects.

Historically, the PMT has focused primarily on the identification and evaluation of potential transit expansion projects. However, the MBTA is currently facing a \$2.7 billion backlog of maintenance projects that must be addressed to bring the system into a state of good repair and to provide users with reliable, convenient, accessible, safe, and secure transit services. The 2008 PMT will, therefore, also strongly emphasize system preservation projects.

During late spring and early

# State and Local Governments Act on Climate Change

• Climate Change *cont. from p. 5*

state cap-and-trade program that will require electric power generators to limit their emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and allow emitters to trade their permits to release emissions.

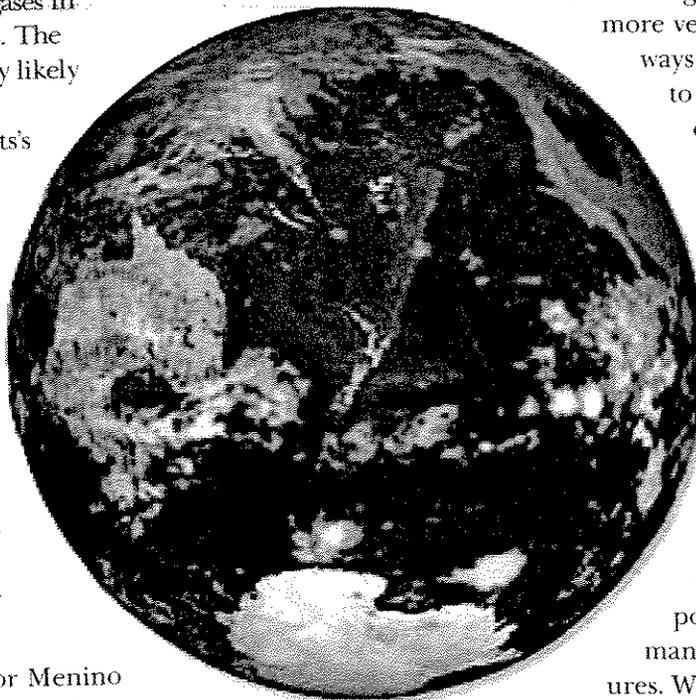
In its April 2 watershed decision, the Supreme Court ruled in "Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency" that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the authority to regulate heat-trapping gases in automobile emissions. The decision makes it very likely that the EPA will approve Massachusetts' and 11 other states' programs to limit tailpipe emissions, beginning with the 2009 model year. Perhaps more importantly, this ruling opened the door for others in local, state, and federal government to take action on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

On April 12, Mayor Menino enacted an executive order that requires Boston city government to cut GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050. As a first step, the city government must cut emissions to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Six days later, Governor Patrick signed an executive order that directs state agencies to cut energy use to 20 percent below 2002 levels by 2012 and 35 percent by 2020. It also requires them

to cut their GHG emissions to amounts 25 percent below 2002 levels over the next five years, 40 percent by 2020, and 80 percent by 2050.

Most recently, Governor Patrick changed Massachusetts environmental policy so that developers planning projects large enough to warrant a state environmental impact report (EIR) are now required to estimate GHG



emissions for these projects and reduce the emissions with measures such as energy-efficient lighting, alternative fuels, and commuter shuttles. This policy change takes into consideration such impacts as emissions from smokestacks and heating with fossil fuels as well as the effect of thousands of workers driving to a new development.

Proponents for transporta-

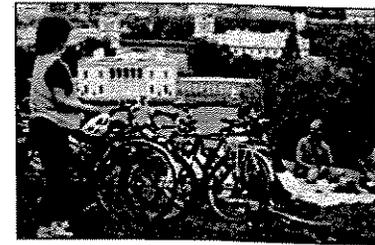
tion projects that require an EIR will need to follow this new policy. These projects generally include those that call for the construction of a new roadway two or more miles in length, the widening of an existing roadway by one or more travel lanes for two or more miles, a new interchange on a completed limited-access highway, the generation of new average daily traffic amounting to 3,000 or

more vehicles on roadways providing access to a single location, or the construction of 1,000 or more new parking spaces at a single location. The emissions from these transportation projects might, for example, be offset with transportation demand management measures.

While the policy change was effective immediately, an advisory committee will develop a protocol for the EIR emissions analysis and further guidance for mitigation efforts by July 1, 2007.

If climate trends continue as projected, climate change will have significant impacts on the Boston region, and the climate and weather patterns in Boston at the end of this century will look more like those now found in Richmond, Virginia, or Atlanta, Georgia.

## National Bike Week Commuter Challenge



In celebration of National Bike Week (May 14–18), Boston area Transportation Management Associations, the City of Cambridge, and Harvard University have issued a corporate challenge in which awards will be presented to companies with the highest number of employees who bicycle to work at least once during Bike Week. In this friendly challenge, which is designed to encourage people to bike to their workplace, school, or transit stop, companies will compete against other companies of similar size.

For information about how to register for the challenge and about other National Bike Week events, go to [www.abctma.com/news/bikeweek.htm](http://www.abctma.com/news/bikeweek.htm).

GHGs, which include CO<sub>2</sub>, a common emission from motor vehicles, contribute to climate change. GHGs warm the earth's atmosphere and are so called because they simulate the effect of a greenhouse, trapping heat within the atmosphere and contributing to an increase in the earth's temperature.

In Massachusetts, as is the case nationally, transportation sources emit more CO<sub>2</sub> than any other sources.

# Invite Us Over for a Walkable Community Workshop

The Boston Region MPO is continuing its Walkable Community Workshops program. Since 2004, MPO staff members have given these workshops in a dozen communities in order to promote pedestrian safety. In addition to improving safety, a good walking environment is an important aspect of community livability, which in turn is related to a community's economic viability and individuals' physical health. People walk more when the environment is safe and pleasant.

If there are areas in your municipality where you wish to encourage more walking, contact us. A mem-

ber of the MPO staff will meet with you, go over the details of the program, and check the site(s) you want to include. Candidate sites might be difficult spots for pedestrians, places that are now relatively attractive for walking but could simply use some improvement, or areas in which new development is planned.

The workshops start with a presentation on the elements that make a community more walker-friendly. Participants then go out to look at a nearby site and return to discuss ways to make improvements.

The workshops are open to all those with an interest in

improving walkability: elected officials, residents, and professionals in the fields of planning, law enforcement, engineering, education, and business.

The MPO held the previous dozen Walkable Community Workshops in Arlington, Bellingham, Belmont, Beverly, Hull, Maynard, Reading, Rockport, Saugus, Scituate, Wellesley, and Wrentham. If you think your community or neighborhood would benefit

from hosting a workshop, please call Cathy Buckley Lewis at (617) 973-7118, or e-mail [walkable@ctps.org](mailto:walkable@ctps.org). Funding for this ongoing MPO program is provided by the Federal Highway Administration, with local matching funds from the Executive Office of Transportation and Public Works.



Everett workshop participants assessing walkability

## Boston Region MPO Activities

### BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The Boston Region MPO, upon the recommendation of its Transportation Planning and Programming Committee, approved JOURNEY TO 2030, the long-range transportation plan for the region (see the article on page 1). In addition, the Committee approved the distribution of Amendment Two and Adjustment Three to the federal fiscal years (FFY) 2007-2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for public comment (see the TIP article on page 1). The Committee also kicked off the development of the FFYs 2008-2010 TIP by hosting Municipal TIP Input Day, an all-day meeting at which local officials presented their projects and priorities for the MPO to consider for inclusion.

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

At the April 11 meeting, Rick Arena, president of the Association for Public Transportation, shared his concern that congestion along the I-95 corridor, which stretches from Maine to Florida, affects the economy of Massachusetts by increasing travel time and slowing the movement of goods. He said that new links for commuters and freight need to be created and that planning and investment from

Massachusetts's public and private sectors would be necessary for the region to stay competitive in the corridor's economy.

With supersized, post-Panamax shipping vessels due to begin arriving at the Ports of New York and New Jersey in the near future, Massachusetts may be able to draw smaller ships, he added. Also, there may be opportunities to maintain intra-regional mobility in the corridor by creatively tapping into the additional capacity in the transportation infrastructures of the smaller regions along the corridor.

### ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

The Office for Transportation Access announced that MBTA Subway Operations is expanding the use of bridgeplates to span the gaps between subway car floors and platforms. Customers requiring a bridgeplate should notify either an MBTA customer service agent, station official, train operator, or train attendant.

Representatives of THE RIDE announced that the paratransit service carried 141,073 customers in March, an all-time

high for passengers served per month. A meeting was held with Framingham town officials to discuss the possibility of the MBTA continuing THE RIDE service in the Framingham area in the event that the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is formed. Negotiations will be held between the MBTA and the towns that would be within the proposed RTA.

Elections will take place at the May 23 meeting. The June meeting will be held in the evening.

PMT cont. from p. 3

provide better service. Comments from members of the public will be used to develop strategies and policies for addressing current and anticipated mobility problems in the region. (Please refer to the calendar for this month's meeting dates.)

The MBTA will also be advised by a Stakeholder Advisory Committee that includes representatives from key agencies/organizations, municipalities, transportation advocacy groups, businesses, community development interests, and academia. The committee's kick-off meeting was held on April 2 at the State Transportation Building. Subsequent meetings are scheduled for the fourth Thursday of each month throughout the course of the project.

For more information, visit the PMT Web site at [www.bostonmpo.org/pmt.htm](http://www.bostonmpo.org/pmt.htm).

On March 29, Governor Deval Patrick's office released the Fiscal Year 2008 Chapter 90 apportionments. This year, \$150 million will be available to cities and towns based on a formula that weighs population, employment, and number of local roadway miles in each municipality. This is an increase of 25 percent over last year's apportionment.

Municipalities use these funds

for transportation improvements, including, but not limited to, roadway resurfacing, sidewalk improvements and installation, right-of-way acquisition, street lighting, and other projects. Municipalities are reimbursed for approved construction costs as a project progresses.

For more information, visit [www.mhd.state.ma.us/ch90FY.asp?c=08a](http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/ch90FY.asp?c=08a).

## A Plan for Action

• South Coast Rail cont. from p. 2

- Identifying locations for station sites
- Completing the state and federal environmental review process
- Procuring passenger coaches and locomotives
- Constructing additional tracks at Boston's South Station
- Constructing a midday layover facility for off-peak periods

Visit [www.southcoastrail.com](http://www.southcoastrail.com) for more information on the project and to read *A Plan for Action*.

## Public Participation

• Public Process cont. from p. 2

(see the next issue of *TRANSREPORT* for details), or submit written comments to:

Bernard Cohen, MPO Chair  
10 Park Plaza, Room 2150  
Boston, MA 02116

Copies of the proposed program and meeting information may be obtained at [www.bostonmpo.org](http://www.bostonmpo.org) or by contacting MPO staff at (617) 973-7100 (voice), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), [publicinformation@ctps.org](mailto:publicinformation@ctps.org) (e-mail) Accessible formats are available upon request.

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